

## Schofield Barracks, Hawaii

### Helping Cook Islands Prepare for the Worst

IF a hurricane strikes a remote Pacific island, it's too late to start working on the disaster-relief plan. With this in mind, U.S. Army, Pacific, sends Disaster Preparedness Mitigation Assessment teams to locations throughout Asia and the Pacific to help requesting countries prepare for the worst.

When USARPAC recently sent a team to the Cook Islands in the South Seas, they asked the Military Traffic Management Command's 599th Transportation Group to provide crucial transportation expertise.

The Cook Islands lie due south of Hawaii and 1,000 miles below the equator. The 13 islands are self-governing, though they defer defense matters and external affairs to New Zealand.

Traffic-management specialist Rick Pollom and Grey Marsh, a civil engineer with

MTMC's Transportation Engineering Agency, joined 10 other team members to assess the remote island chain. Other team members were experts in fields such as public health, communications, mapping, power, fuel handling, heavy equipment and sanitation.

In addition to port surveys of the two main islands of Rarotonga and Aitutake, the MTMC team provided a complete transportation analysis, including airports and highways.

According to LTC John Solon, a USARPAC civil affairs officer, the report prepared by the DPMA team will help the Cook Islanders improve their own disaster plans, and a final report and mapping used by USARPAC will help the United States' effort to respond to a disaster in the area.

Solon added that the program establishes and reinforces professional contacts and working relationships among the U.S. military and foreign service, other U.S. governmental

organizations, host-nation and territorial government leaders, non-governmental organizations, private volunteer organizations and other international organizations.

The DPMA program is run and operated by Army civil affairs personnel, joined by the Center of Excellence and the Pacific Disaster Center, both headquartered in Hawaii. — *Joseph Bonfiglio, 599th Trans. Grp. Public Affairs Office*

## Fort Hood, Texas

### Reserve Helicopters Descend on Fort Hood

NEARLY 300 Reserve soldiers of the 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, and 7th Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regt., completed annual training here this summer — and assumed an important fire-prevention role during one of Texas' driest seasons.

The 7th Bn. is a CH-47D Chinook unit with a newly activated battalion headquarters

and company at Fort Hood and companies in Olathe, Kan., and Fort Carson, Colo. Their mission was to support the 7th Sqn., an Apache unit, based in Conroe, Texas, as it conducted gunnery training.

The Chinooks provide a heavy-lift capability and are used to transport equipment, supplies and personnel and for fire suppression in the event of a range fire. Sudden brush fires caused by gunnery are not uncommon, especially during summer months, when vegetation is tinder-dry. The Chinooks can be equipped with 2,000-



Rick Pollom



Avatiu Harbor on Rarotonga — the main harbor for the Cook Islands — was one of several places the Disaster Preparedness Mitigation Assessment team visited while compiling information for its report.



**Two CH-47 Chinooks of Co. F, 7th Bn., 158th Avn. Regt., await another mission while supporting an Apache unit conducting gunnery training at Fort Hood.**

gallon water buckets that can be used to drench the fires.

"It's great having the Chinooks here to provide support," said SPC Jerry Storch, a 7th Bn. mechanic. "We couldn't train without them."

Fort Hood range control officer Larry Ximenez echoed those comments, but from a firefighting standpoint. "In the past we've used Black Hawk helicopters for fire suppression, but they can only lift a 600-gallon bucket. The Chinooks move more water and stop fires faster," he said.

The Chinooks were used for other missions as well.

"We're working with some of the active Army units here, helping them with their training missions," said 7th Bn. commander LTC Chuck Fletcher. "It's good experience for our crews, since these are exactly the types of missions they would do if deployed."

In one exercise, the Chinooks were used in a mass-casualty simulation to move personnel, supplies and vehicles.

SGT David Preston, a 7th Bn. flight engineer, said he joined the battalion's Company A because he liked the idea of

being part of a unit as it was just starting up. The unit was activated at Fort Hood last October and is currently recruiting personnel and taking delivery of its helicopters.

"We're going to have the chance to stay real busy at Fort Hood, with lots of different missions," Preston said.

"In addition to our annual training exercises, we expect that Co. A will be called on throughout the year for support," said Fletcher. "Even after the other aircraft go back to Conroe and Olathe, we'll still have Chinooks here at Fort Hood." — *Tony Johnson, U.S. Army Reserve Command PAO*

#### **Dublin, Calif.**

## **New Lab Enhances Medical Skills**

TRAINING keeps Reserve soldiers qualified, but it's the quality of training that's essential to retaining them.

It was that concern that drove Connie Kruse, clinical coordinator for Regional Training Site-Medical at Parks Reserve Forces Training Area, here, to design and develop a Clinical Skills Lab.

The lab, which provides a training platform to bring Reservists up to standards prior to deployments or participation in exercises, was first used before the start of Operation Golden Medic 2000, a June exercise involving more than 1,300 soldiers.

"We needed this desperately, because a lot of Reservists don't work in the medical field in their civilian jobs, and their skills can be lost," said Kruse, an experienced nurse. "That's why I made the lab as comprehensive as I did."

Updated equipment, quality instructors selected for their

areas of expertise, and hands-on training in five ancillary skill rooms and six primary skill lab groups help make the lab successful. Areas of training include multiple trauma and emergency-room operations; cardiac and intensive care; orthopedics; chemical-biological and burn procedures, neurological and medical care; operating-room procedures and respiratory therapy; and pediatrics care.

"I don't have equipment like this at my home station," said SSG Jacqueline Holmes, who is assigned to the 330th Combat Support Hospital at Fort Sheridan, Ill. "The equipment makes it real."

A typical scenario con-

ducted at the pediatric-care station required nurses to treat an infant who had been in a mock explosion and was listless and unresponsive. At the labor and delivery station, equipped with a pelvic and baby mannequin, personnel practiced unusual birth scenarios and complications.

The lab even allows for training in special initiatives. For example, Defense Department efforts to increase awareness of domestic violence bolstered the idea for a sexual assault response team that taught nurses how to interview rape victims, perform suspect exams, and collect and preserve evidence. — *Lynne Schaack, Parks RFTA PAO*



Lynne Schaack

**During a mock surgery in the Clinical Skills Lab, a surgeon inserts a pin in the arm of a "patient" whose arm was "fractured" by simulated gunfire.**